

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

REMARKS

Applicant hereby submits this Response and Amendment to respond to the Office Action dated November 20, 2006. Claims 1-51 have been examined. Applicant thanks the Examiner for noting that claims 10, 17, 21-23, 34, 35, 37, 41, and 47-49 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. However, Applicant believes that all of claims 1-51 now contain allowable subject matter for the reasons discussed below. Claims 1, 20, 24, 28, 29, 32, 36, 38, 43, 44 and 51 have been amended to more clearly claim the invention of the subject application and correct minor typographical errors noted by the Applicant. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner reconsider the rejections of claims 1-9, 11-16, 18-20, 24-33, 36, 38-40, 42-46, 50, and 51 to find all claims presently in the application allowable based on the above indicated amended claims and the arguments that follow. Applicant notes for the record that a number of these claim amendments are made to facilitate the Examiner's understanding of the claims and that none of the claim amendments are made for reasons of patentability.

The Applicant has reviewed the prior art cited and applied in the Office Action mailed November 20, 2006, and the reasons indicated for the rejection of claims 1-9, 11-16, 18-20, 24-33, 36, 38-40, 42-46, 50, and 51. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Applicant has amended claims 1, 20, 24, 28, 29, 32, 36, 43, 44 and 51 to more clearly claim the invention even though Applicant believes the claims as read in

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

light of the specification are distinguished over the cited and applied prior art.

Applicant has amended claim 38 to correct for the incidental insertion of a word into the original claim. Further, Applicant has also amended claims 36, 43 and 51 to correct minor typographical errors. Applicants have also amended claims 38 and 43 to overcome the Examiner's objections. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in light of the claim amendments and following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-9, 11-16, 18-20, 24-33, 36, 38-40, 42-46, 50, and 51 should be allowed for the following reasons.

The Examiner objected to claims 38 and 43-49 for various informalities.

Applicant has amended claim 38 to be complete and claim 43 to recite "at least one of" as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, the Examiner's objection to the claims has been overcome.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20, 29-31, 36, 38-40, and 43-46 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Maus et al. (U.S. Patent 5,610,844). This rejection is respectfully traversed. As noted above, claims 1 and 44 have been amended to more clearly claim the invention of the subject application. For the following reasons, claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20, 29-31, 36, 38-40, and 43-46 are patentable over Maus et al.

Maus et al. fails to anticipate claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20, 29-31, 36, 38-40, and 43-46 for at least the reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest, each and every element and limitation of the claims. In particular, Maus et al. does not disclose a method of diagnosing a catalyst including "controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders" as recite in amended claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20, 29-31,

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

36, 38-40, and 43-46. Nor does Maus et al. teach or suggest such a limitation. Rather, Maus et al. discloses a system that introduces excess fuel **equally to all cylinders** at a desired level to diagnose a catalyst.

Maus et al. discloses a method of catalyst diagnosis that uses a momentary disabling of the ignition system voltage to the engine's spark plugs to cause an unburned fuel and air mixture to exit the engine's exhaust. (See Maus et al. at, for example, col. 8, lines 16-29). Maus teaches that the "electronic control...**controls the engine through control lines**" so that the "operational condition of the internal combustion engine is briefly disrupted" (See Maus et al. at Col. 8, lines 16-20). Maus et al. mentions injection of additional fuel, but says nothing about controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders. Rather, Maus et al. discloses a system that controls the "engine 1" by multiple "control lines 9" such that **all individual cylinders' are controlled alike**. As shown in Fig. 1 of Maus et al., there is no detail to engine 1 and the control lines 9 are not designated for any particular purpose. Because Maus et al. teaches his system is responsive to the exhaust gases of all engine cylinders, it is therefore unable to control the quantity of fuel to **selected individual cylinders** as has been disclosed by the Applicant, nor is it inherent in Maus et al. Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest anywhere that the individual cylinders of the engine are set independently to gas and air flows different from one another as is taught by the present invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus fails to teach or suggest controlling changes to the conditions of **selected individual cylinders** as indicated in claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20, 29-31, 36, 38-40, and 43-46 of the present invention, and

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

the claims are not anticipated (or rendered obvious) by Maus et al. for at least the reason that Maus fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claims.

Claim 7 is also patentable over Maus et al. for at least the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest determining whether the catalytic converter is malfunctioning by using the first temperature characteristic and the second temperature characteristic for modifying changes in gas concentrations entering said catalyst from an engine. As such, the present invention may modify the quantity or frequency of the unburned fuel and air mixture based on any temperature characteristic. On the other hand, Maus only teaches that a change in the quantity or frequency of the unburned fuel and air mixture may be selected to differ from all conceivable operationally caused changes in order to associate a measured temperature characteristics with that change. (See Maus et al. at Col. 4, lines 5-24). Maus et al. fails to indicate anywhere that the quantity or frequency of the unburned fuel and air mixture may be selected based on a measured temperature characteristic. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claim 7 or point to a place in Maus et al. that shows modifying the changes in gas concentrations based on measured temperature characteristics.

Claim 8 is also patentable over Maus et al. for at least the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose that a design of a catalytic converter is selected to provide consistent (to increase the consistency of diagnosis) and discernment of differences between ... malfunctioning and marginally good catalytic converters, as recited in claim 8. Rather, Maus discloses that the accuracy of a *given* catalytic converter, especially those of greater lengths, may be increased by measuring temperature at

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

multiple locations or partial volumes of *given* catalytic converter. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 8-18). Maus makes no mention of selecting shorter length catalytic converters to improve the accuracy of its diagnosis, but only of increasing the number of temperature sensors when the length of the catalytic converter increases. (See Maus et al. at Col. 8, lines 52-56). Nor does Maus address selecting a catalytic converter design to provide for consistent results from a catalyst's diagnosis, independent of said diagnosis' accuracy, or a method to distinguish malfunctioning catalysts from marginally good catalysts. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus fails to anticipate claim 8 for at least the reason that Maus et al. fails to disclose each and every limitation of the claim.

Claim 16 is also patentable over Maus et al. for the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest determining a third temperature characteristic *after disabling the change in exhaust gas concentrations* ... so as to confirm test condition consistency, as recited in claim 16. Rather, Maus et al. merely discloses taking temperature measurements "*during changes of the chemical and/or physical properties of the gas mixture*" at multiple locations. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 4, lines 57-64). Maus fails to disclose taking any subsequent temperature measurements *after* the changes of chemical and/or physical properties of the gas mixture so as to confirm test condition consistency. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to point to where in Maus et al. there is a particular statement supporting the anticipation of claim 16, or withdraw the rejection of claim 16 because Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

Claim 20 is also patentable over Maus et al. for the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest "causing cycling of exhaust air-fuel ratio characteristics between rich and lean" as recited in claim 7. Rather, as mentioned above, Maus only teaches causing a "brief injection of additional fuel," which merely causes exhaust air-fuel ratio characteristics to become rich for a brief moment before returning to stoichiometric. (See Maus et al., for example, at Col. 8, lines 15-21). Maus fails to indicate anywhere that exhaust air-fuel ratio characteristics cycle between rich and lean. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus fails to anticipate claim 20 for the additional reason that Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Claim 36 is also patentable over Maus et al. for the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest a method for *increasing heating rates* of a catalytic converter by detecting at least one operational condition "prior to entering stoichiometric engine operation after cold start, and controlling changes in exhaust gases' concentrations entering said catalyst...*upon initiation* of catalyst chemical exothermic activity" as recited in claim 36. Rather, Maus only teaches that "it is possible to *check* various aspects of the operation of the catalytic converter" by observing the derivative of a temperature characteristic. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 2-6). Maus discloses a method of "*checking*" the *diagnosis* of the catalytic converter by observing whether "the start of the catalytic reaction" and the measurement of the temperature probes is consistent with the diagnostic results. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 2-15). Maus, therefore, fails to disclose, teach or suggest detecting the start of the catalytic reaction for the purpose of heating the catalytic converter *at a faster rate* after

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/637,189
Patent Application

cold start. Maus' detection of the start of the catalytic reaction serves a different purpose than the present invention; so Maus also fails to disclose controlling changes in exhaust gases' concentrations entering the catalyst *upon* said detection. Maus fails to disclose relating the time that the "operational condition of the internal combustion engine is briefly disrupted" to the determination of the start of the catalytic reaction. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 16-20). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus fails to anticipate claim 36 for the additional reason that Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Claim 38 is also patentable over Maus et al. for the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach, or suggest disabling changes in exhaust gas concentrations upon measuring conditions indicating catalyst temperature conditions are approached defined values, as recited in claim 38. Maus et al. is directed to diagnosing the condition of a catalyst by changing exhaust gas concentrations with an injection of additional fuel *for a brief moment*. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 16-21). Not only does Maus fail to disclose disabling said changes for any reason, but said changes occur nearly instantaneous so as to be practically incapable of being disabled. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to point to where in Maus et al. there is a particular statement supporting the anticipation of claim 38, or withdraw the rejection of claim 38 for the additional reason that Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Claim 40 is also patentable over Maus et al. for the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest that a catalytic converter design can be selected to increase the accuracy of its diagnosis or discernment of temperature, as recited in claim

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

40. Rather, Maus discloses that the accuracy of a *given* catalytic converter, especially those of greater lengths, may be increased by measuring temperature at multiple locations or partial volumes of *given* catalytic converter. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 8-18). Maus makes no mention of altering the design of the catalytic converter by, for example, selecting shorter length catalytic converters to improve the accuracy of its diagnosis, but only discloses increasing the number of temperature sensors when the length of the catalytic converter increases. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 52-56). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus fails to anticipate claim 40 for the additional reason that Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Claim 46 is also patentable over Maus et al. for the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest modifying the starting point for changing the conditions of exhaust gases entering a catalyst based upon prior determinations of the catalyst's condition, as recited in claim 46. Maus fails to disclose, teach or suggest relating the time that the "operational condition of the internal combustion engine is briefly disrupted" to any prior determinations of the catalyst's condition. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 16-20). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus fails to anticipate claim 46 for at least the reason that Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11-16, 18, 20, 29-31, 36, 38-40, and 43-46 are not anticipated by Maus et al. and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

The Examiner rejected claims 24-26, and 28 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fujimoto et al. (US Patent 5,591,905). This rejection is respectfully traversed. As noted above, claims 24 and 28 have been amended to more clearly claim the invention of the subject application. For the following reasons, claims 24-26, and 28 are patentable over Fujimoto et al.

Fujimoto et al. fails to anticipate claims 24-26, and 28 for at least the reason that Fujimoto et al. does not disclose each and every limitation of the claims. In particular, Fujimoto et al. does not disclose "controlling a change in fuel quantity to at least one **selected individual cylinder**" as included in claims 24-26, and 28. Nor does Fujimoto et al. teach or suggest such a limitation. Rather, Fujimoto et al., like Maus et al., discloses a system that introduces changes in fuel quantity **equally to all cylinders** to diagnose a catalyst.

Fujimoto fails to disclose changing fuel quantities of selected individual cylinders as it designates an air-fuel ratio control for "carrying out of air-fuel ratio of the engine." (See Fujimoto et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 5-7 and lines 15-17). Further evidence of Fujimoto's failure to disclose said limitation is provided in that an intake pipe supplies a [single] **mixture** to the **engine** to be injected by an [single] **injector**. (See Fujimoto et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 34-41). As noted in Fujimoto et al. at col. 9, lines 5-7, a single fuel injector signal J is disclosed where "the fuel injection signal J is set to be longer, and the air-fuel ratio is set on the rich side." When referring to the system in Fig. 3, Fujimoto et al. at col. 5, lines 37-40, describes that "4 is an intake manifold mounted at a connecting portion between the downstream side of the intake pipe 3 and the engine 1, and 5 is an injector mounted in the upstream of the intake pipe 2 to inject

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

fuel.” Therefore, it is clear that Fujimoto et al. discloses a system that controls the “engine” such that **all individual cylinders’ are controlled alike with one injector.** Because Fujimoto et al. teaches his system is responsive to the exhaust gases of all engine cylinders, it is therefore unable to control the quantity of fuel to **selected individual cylinders** as has been disclosed by the Applicant. The fact is that Fujimoto et al. fails to indicate anywhere that the individual cylinders of the engine are set independently to gas and air flows different from one another as is taught by the present invention. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Fujimoto fails to teach or suggest changing the conditions of “**selected individual cylinders**” as included in the limitations of claims 24-26, and 28 of the present invention and the claims are not anticipated (or rendered obvious) by Fujimoto et al. for at least the reason that Fujimoto fails to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claims.

Claims 24-26, and 28 are also patentable over Fujimoto et al. for at least the additional reason that Fujimoto et al. does not disclose “cycling an oxygen sensor’s output prior to stoichiometric closed loop fuel control operation” as included in claims 24-26, and 28. Rather, Fujimoto merely *detects* a change in oxygen sensor output as it “reads the air-fuel ratio signals V1 and V2” upon determining that the catalytic converter has reached a “temperature which can provide efficient oxidation/reduction.” (See Fujimoto et al. at, for example, Col 10, lines 24-25, Col. 9, lines 26-29, and lines 36-52). Fujimoto fails to disclose enabling *any* changes prior to stoichiometric closed loop fuel control as no further steps are taken if the catalytic converter is not at an efficient temperature. (See Fujimoto et al., for example, at Col. 10, lines 21-27). Fujimoto instead discloses a system that depends upon stoichiometric closed loop control as it

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

requires "a state suitable for deciding deterioration of the catalytic converter, that is, a steady state of the engine." (See Fujimoto et al., for example, at Col. 10, lines 1-9). As evidenced by the lack of transient measurements occurring in the early stages of Figure 7 when operating rich, in contrast to the present invention's Figure 4, Fujimoto fails to disclose taking steps to toggle the oxygen sensor before stoichiometric closed loop control. (See Fujimoto et al. at, for example, Figure 7). Any toggling of the oxygen sensor in the system disclosed by Fujimoto is due to the engine having reached stoichiometric closed loop control. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Fujimoto fails to disclose, teach or suggest "cycling an oxygen sensor's output prior to stoichiometric closed loop fuel control operation" as included in claims 24-26, and 28 of the present invention and the claims are not anticipated (or rendered obvious) by Fujimoto et al. for at least the reason that Fujimoto fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claims.

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 24-26, and 28 are not anticipated by Fujimoto et al. and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

The Examiner rejected claims 50 and 51 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamashita et al. (US Patent 5,727,383). This rejection is respectfully traversed. For the following reasons, claims 50 and 51 are patentable over Yamashita et al.

Yamashita et al. fails to anticipate claim 50 for at least the reason that Yamashita et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest each and every element and limitation of the claim. In particular, Yamashita et al. does not disclose "controlling said device for

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

compensating adverse changes in cylinder intake airflow" as recited in claim 50.

Rather, Yamashita discloses a device that *measures* airflow and intake air quantity in order to detect catalytic converter deterioration. (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 2, lines 3-22; Col. 9, lines 57-61; Col 10, lines 12-19, lines 35-55). Instead of compensating for *instantaneous* airflow as in the present invention embodied in claim 50, Yamashita measures the *accumulated* airflow to estimate the quantity of heat required to reach catalyst activation (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 2; lines 3-22; Col. 10, lines 35-55). Yamashita, therefore, does not disclose, teach or suggest a method for diagnosing a catalyst by detecting catalyst temperature changes, but instead, measures accumulated airflow up to a certain catalyst temperature. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Yamashita fails to disclose "controlling said device for *compensating* adverse changes in cylinder intake airflow" as included in claim 50 of the present invention and the claim is not anticipated (or rendered obvious) by Yamashita et al. for at least the reason that Yamashita fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Yamashita et al. also fails to anticipate claim 51 for at least the reason that Yamashita et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim. In particular, Yamashita et al. does not disclose "changing at least one operating parameter of the engine to cause the temperature of the catalyst to rapidly rise when...engine operational conditions preclude establishing stoichiometric closed loop fuel control operation" as recited in claim 51. Rather, Yamashita discloses a system that diagnoses a catalyst by estimating the quantity of heat required to reach catalyst activation by measuring the accumulated intake air quantity. (See Yamashita et al. at, for example,

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

Col. 2; lines 3-22; Col. 10, lines 35-55). In order to obtain accurate results, therefore, Yamashita must maintain stoichiometric conditions that increases the temperature of the catalyst at a slow and steady rate. (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 9, lines 2-6). Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to point to where in Yamashita et al. there is a particular statement supporting the anticipation of claim 51, or withdraw the rejection of claim 51 for at least the reason that Yamashita et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 50 and 51 are not anticipated by Yamashita et al. and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

The Examiner rejected claims 3-6 under USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Maus et al. (US Patent 5,610,844) in view of Holl (US Patent 3,785,151). This rejected is respectfully traversed. For the following reasons, claims 3-6 are patentable over Maus et al. in view of Holl.

Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner has failed to make a prima facie case of obviousness and that claims 3-6 are unpatentable over Maus et al. in view of Holl, because the reference fails to teach each and every limitation of the claims 3-6. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no teaching, suggestion or motivation for combining the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 3-6 depend upon claim 1, and thus have all the limitations of claim 1. As noted above, Maus et al. fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention of claims 3-6 for at least the reason that it does not show "controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders." Holl fails to make up the deficiencies of Maus et al.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

because, like Maus et al., it fails to disclose, teach, or suggest controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders for diagnosing a catalyst. Rather, Holl recirculates exhaust gases directly into the exhaust manifold so as to introduce recirculated exhaust gases **equally to all cylinders**. (See Holl at, for example, Col. 2, lines 28-33; Col. 3, lines 10, 16). Therefore, Holl does not teach or suggest controlling conditions of **"selected individual engine cylinders"** as required by claim 1, and the claims are patentable over Maus et al. and Holl, either individually or in combination, for at least these reasons.

Further, there is no suggestion or motivation for combining Maus et al. in view of Holl, particularly for the purpose of claims 3-6. At least one embodiment of the present invention in claims 3-6 is directed to changing concentrations of nitrogen oxide(s) gases at the catalyst in order to *determine whether the operation of the catalyst is malfunctioning*. Holl, however, is directed at changing concentrations of nitrogen oxides(s) gases at the catalyst for the *sole purpose of decreasing a catalyst's temperature for over-temperature protection to the catalytic converter*. (See Holl at, for example, Col. 3, lines 10-26). Holl also teaches away from the claimed invention by teaching that "only a relatively small percentage of the exhaust gases" are recycled. (See Holl at, for example, Col. 1, lines 50-54). That the invention embodied in claims 3-6 may require recycling large amounts of nitrogen oxide(s) in order to detect a change in temperature provides further evidence of a lack of suggestion or motivation to combine Maus et al. and Holl to achieve the claimed invention. Therefore, without more, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine Maus et al. and Holl to achieve the invention of claims 3-6.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

Claim 5 is also patentable over Maus et al. for at least the additional reason that Maus et al. does not disclose that a catalytic converter design can be selected to improve the accuracy of its diagnosis or discernment of temperature, as recited in claim 5. Rather, Maus discloses that the accuracy of a *given* catalytic converter, especially those of greater lengths, may be increased by measuring temperature at multiple locations or partial volumes of *given* catalytic converter. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 8-18). Maus makes no mention of selecting shorter length catalytic converters to improve the accuracy of its diagnosis, but only of increasing the number of temperature sensors when the length of the catalytic converter increases. (See Maus et al. at, for example, Col. 8, lines 52-56). Again, Holl fails to make up this deficiency of Maus et al. Holl does not disclose selecting a catalytic converter design to make detection of a malfunctioning catalyst more accurate. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Maus and Holl, either individually or combined, fail to render obvious claim 5 for at least the reason that both Maus et al. and Holl fail to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim.

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3-6 are not rendered obvious over Maus et al. in view of Holl and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

The Examiner rejected claim 19 under USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Maus et al. (US Patent 5,610,844) in view of Fujimoto (US Patent 5,591,905). This rejected is respectfully traversed. For the following reasons, claim 19 is patentable over Maus et al. in view of Fujimoto et al.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner has failed to make a prima facie case that claim 19 is unpatentable over Maus et al. in view of Fujimoto because the references fail to teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claim 19.

Claim 19 depends upon claims 1, 9, and 11, and thus has all the limitations of claims 1, 9, and 11. As noted above, Maus et al. fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention of claim 19 for at least the reason that it does not show "controlling changes to conditions of **selected individual engine cylinders**." Fujimoto fails to make up the deficiencies of Maus et al. because, like Maus et al., it fails to disclose, teach, or suggest controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders for diagnosing a catalyst. Rather, as explained in more detail above, Fujimoto designates an air-fuel ratio control for "carrying out of air-fuel ratio of the engine." (See Fujimoto et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 5-7; Col. 5, lines 15-17.) Further evidence of Fujimoto's failure to disclose said limitation is provided in that an intake pipe supplies a single mixture to the engine to be injected by a single injector. (See Fujimoto et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 34-41). Therefore, Fujimoto does not teach or suggest controlling conditions of "selected individual engine cylinders" as required by claim 1, and the claims are patentable over Maus et al. and Fujimoto, either individually or in combination.

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 19 is not rendered obvious over Maus et al. in view of Fujimoto et al. and is patentable for at least the reasons given above.

The Examiner rejected claim 27 under USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Fujimoto et al. (US Patent 5,591,905) in view of Yamashita et al. (US Patent 5,727,383).

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

This rejected is respectfully traversed. For the following reasons, claim 27 is patentable over Fujimoto et al. in view of Yamashita et al.

Applicant respectfully submits that once again the Examiner has failed to make a prima facie case that claim 27 is unpatentable over Fujimoto et al. in view of Yamashita et al. because the reference fails to teach each and every limitation of the claim 27. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no suggestion or motivation for combining the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Claim 27 depends upon claim 24, and thus has all the limitations of claim 24. As noted above, Fujimoto et al. fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention of claim 24 for at least the reason that it does not show "controlling a change in fuel quantity to at least one selected individual cylinder." Yamashita fails to make up the deficiencies of Fujimoto et al. because, like Fujimoto et al., Yamashita fails to disclose, teach, or suggest controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders. Rather, Yamashita creates "an air-fuel mixture of a predetermined air-fuel ratio...[and] the mixture is fed to each cylinder" so as to introduce the same air-fuel mixture equally to all cylinders. (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 5, lines 1-13). Therefore, Yamashita does not teach or suggest controlling conditions of "selected individual cylinders" as required by claims 24 and 27, and the claims are patentable over Fujimoto et al. and Yamashita et al., either individually or in combination.

Further, there is no suggestion or motivation for combining Fujimoto et al. in view of Yamashita, particularly for the purpose of claim 27. Rather than point to suggestion or motivation described in the references, the Examiner appears to take Official Notice that one skilled in the art would combine the reference. This use of

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

Official notice is traversed and the Applicant respectfully request the Examiner to point to where within the reference there is suggestion or motivation, or provide some other evidence to show why and how one skilled in the art would combine Yamashita with Fujimoto in the manner necessary to disclose each and every element and limitation of claim 27. Yamashita discloses a method of *determining* catalyst activation on the basis of oxygen sensor *feedback, after closed loop control*. (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 6, lines 40-44). Yamashita first checks to ensure that "at a time t3, air-fuel ratio feedback control is started" and only after closed loop is started "at a time t4, a check is made to see if the...catalytic converter is activated on the basis of the delay in the inverting period of the downstream O2 sensor." (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 6, lines 40-44). The method disclosed in Yamashita et al. is only capable of determining catalyst activation *after* closed loop control *on the basis of oxygen sensor feedback*. At least one embodiment of the present invention in claim 27, however, is directed to *confirming* catalyst activation on the basis of oxygen sensor *cycling, before closed loop control (outside a stoichiometric control range after cold start)*. The method disclosed in at least one embodiment of the present invention in claim 27 is capable of determining catalyst activation *before* closed loop control *on the basis of catalyst temperature* and confirming catalyst activation *before* closed loop control *on the basis of oxygen sensor cycling*, irrespective of oxygen sensor feedback. Therefore, without more, one skilled in the art would not combine Fujimoto et al. and Yamashita et al. to achieve the invention of claim 27 because there is no suggestion or motivation for combining these two references.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 27 is not rendered obvious over Fujimoto et al. in view of Yamashita et al. and is patentable over them for at least the reasons given above.

The Examiner rejected claims 32 and 33 under USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Maus et al. (US Patent 5,610,844) in view of Yamashita et al. (US Patent 5,727,383). This rejection is respectfully traversed. As noted above, claim 32 has been amended to more clearly claim the invention of the subject application. For the following reasons, claims 32 and 33 are patentable over Maus et al. in view of Yamashita et al.

Applicant respectfully submits that Examiner has failed to make a prima facie case that claims 32 and 33 are unpatentable over Maus et al. in view of Yamashita et al. because the references fail to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of the claims 32 and 33. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no suggestion or motivation for combining the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 32 and 33 depend upon claim 29, and thus have all the limitations of claim 29. As noted extensively above, Maus et al. fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention of claims 32 and 33 for at least the reason that it does not show "controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders."

Yamashita fails to make up the deficiencies of Maus et al. because, like Maus et al., Yamashita fails to disclose, teach, or suggest controlling changes to conditions of selected individual engine cylinders. Rather, as noted above, Yamashita creates "an air-fuel mixture of a predetermined air-fuel ratio...[and] the mixture is fed to each cylinder" so as to introduce the same air-fuel mixture equally to all cylinders. (See Yamashita et al.

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

at, for example, Col. 5, lines 1-13). Therefore, Yamashita does not disclose, teach or suggest controlling conditions of "selected individual cylinders" as required by claim 29, and the claims are patentable over Maus et al. and Yamashita et al., either individually or in combination.

Further, there is no suggestion or motivation for combining Maus et al. in view of Yamashita, particularly for the purpose of claims 32 and 33. As explained in detail above, Yamashita discloses a method of determining catalyst activation on the basis of *oxygen sensor feedback, after closed loop control*. (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 6, lines 40-44). Yamashita first checks to ensure that "at a time t3, air-fuel ratio feedback control is started" and only after closed loop is started "at a time t4, a check is made to see if the...catalytic converter is activated on the basis of the delay in the inverting period of the downstream O2 sensor." (See Yamashita et al. at, for example, Col. 6, lines 40-44). The method disclosed in Yamashita et al. is only capable of determining catalyst activation *after closed loop control on the basis of oxygen sensor feedback*. There is no suggestion or motivation in either Maus et al or Yamashita et al. for combining the references in the manner necessary to achieve all the elements and limitations of claims 32 and 33 of the present invention, and the Examiner fails to point to any. Rather, the Examiner has relied upon what appears to be a loose explanation based on Official Notice. This is respectfully traversed and Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to come forward with some evidence to support the proposition for combining Maus et al. and Yamashita et al. in the manner necessary to render claims 32 and 33 obvious. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that without more, one

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
Response and Amendment

Appl. Ser. No. 10/657,189
Patent Application

skilled in the art would not combine Maus et al. and Yamashita et al. to achieve the invention of claims 32 and 33.

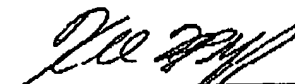
Once again, Applicant thanks the Examiner for noting that claims 10, 17, 21-23, 34, 35, 37, 41, and 47-49 contain allowable subject matter.

Based on the aforementioned, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims, claims 1-51, are patentable over all of the cited and applied references including Maus et al., Holl, Fujimoto et al., and Yamashita et al. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that claims 1 - 51 be allowed and the present application be passed to issue at the earliest possible time.

Applicants hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to the charge card identified in the credit card form provided with the filing of the application.

If for any reason the Examiner believes that the present application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below or on my mobile telephone at 703-731-7220.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Alan Wolff
Registration No. 42,233

Wolff Law Offices, PLLC
209 Providence Rd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
Telephone: 919-419-8582
FAX: 919-419-8583

Date: February 20, 2006